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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 000839

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [AG](#) [SOFA](#)

SUBJECT: MG SENHADJI SEES JOINT MILITARY DIALOGUE AS STEP
TOWARD EXPANDED COOPERATION

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman; reasons 1.4 (B)(D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) MOD Secretary General Senhadji discussed with Ambassador April 25 the upcoming Joint Military Dialogue talks in Washington (May 10-11), expressing appreciation for the excellent program that has been arranged and exchanging views on what to expect from these talks. He agreed with Ambassador that the most important concrete outcome would be the launching of a mechanism that would promote a regular high-level military dialogue and create a framework and foundation for expanding military cooperation. Ambassador advised that the U.S. side, among other things, would almost certainly want to discuss issues such as SOFA arrangements and end-use monitoring, since finding a way forward in these areas would be essential for the growth of our military relationship. Senhadji said Algeria had no problems with end-use assurances, only intrusive monitoring, especially at unit levels; emphasized Algeria's commitment to military modernization and professionalization; said Algeria sought regional stability and saw the stability of Morocco and the throne as an important Algerian interest; and expressed interest in developing a military-to-military intelligence exchange.
(End Summary)

JMD WILL ESTABLISH FRAMEWORK AND
FOUNDATION FOR EXPANDING COOPERATION

2. (C) Ambassador and DATT met with MOD Secretary General MG Senhadji April 25, at latter's request, to discuss his trip to Washington for the May 10-11 Joint Military Dialogue (JMD) and related meetings. Senhadji, as usual when acting in his MOD capacity, was dressed in civilian attire, and was accompanied by his Exec officer, Col. Benmoussset. Senhadji asked what we envisioned as the outcome of the JMD. Would there be a declaration of general principles, specific agreements on expanded cooperation, concrete results or simply dialogue? Ambassador said the concrete and important outcome we sought would be the establishment of a permanent mechanism for a regular, high-level dialogue. Such a dialogue would allow our senior officials to get to know one another better, create a framework and foundation for mutually beneficial expanded military cooperation, and identify how we might move forward in this area. In this regard, the JMD would provide a useful opportunity to exchange views on such issues as arms sales, exercises, training, and information exchanges.

SENHADJI APPRECIATIVE OF EXCELLENT
PROGRAM AND HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

3. (C) Ambassador walked Senhadji through the highlights of the program, noting that he was being received at very high levels and that this was an excellent opportunity to project a positive image for Algeria, its commitment to the war against terrorism, and the Algerian military's commitment to professionalization and respect for the rights of Algerian citizens. Senhadji expressed appreciation for the excellent program that had been arranged and said he looked forward to his visit and discussions. He agreed the JMD would be an important step in building a foundation for expanding cooperation. In response to Ambassador's counsel that he be as frank in acknowledging past human rights problems as in presenting the positive evolution of the Algerian military in Algeria's emerging democracy, Senhadji said he expected the JMD to be a frank and productive exchange of ideas leading to greater engagement between our two countries.

WORKING OUT PROBLEMS OF SOFA AND END-USE
MONITORING ESSENTIAL TO EXPANDED COOPERATION

4. (C) Ambassador advised Senhadji that the U.S. side would almost certainly want to discuss the issue of SOFA arrangements. We knew Algeria had concerns in this area, but finding a way around the problems in this area would be important, if we were to develop the kind of relations and cooperation we had with other friendly countries. SOFAs were routine and normal between the U.S. and its partners, noting that in this regard he had just seen a press report

indicating that even Russia had just worked out SOFA arrangements with NATO. Similarly, resolving end-use monitoring issues would also be important if we were to be able to move forward. Participation in the end-use monitoring program was for us a matter law and required for all countries, including our closest friends and allies, who sought to purchase sensitive U.S. military systems and equipment. While we had some flexibility in how end-use monitoring could be carried out in practice, we did not/not have flexibility on the principle of end-use monitoring. This was simply the way we did business. The many other countries with which we had military sales relationships have not had problems with end-use monitoring.

15. (C) Senhadji responded that Algeria had no basic problem with end-use assurances since it was standard international practice that countries were obliged to certify that weapons systems would not be transferred to third parties. What Algeria had problems with were the intrusive monitoring requirements, including inspections to ensure that equipment was in such and such a military unit. Ambassador clarified (as we have in discussions with other Algerian senior military officials) that the monitoring was intended only to verify that a given piece of equipment was in country, not whether it was in a given military unit. Ambassador said the JMD offered an excellent opportunity to clarify the end-use monitoring issue.

ALGERIAN MILITARY MODERNIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION WILL REINFORCE REGIONAL STABILITY

16. (C) Senhadji said arms procurement was another key issue for Algeria, which wanted to modernize and professionalize its military and to reinforce regional stability. Inter-operability of equipment, he said, was essential if Algeria was to participate in multilateral peacekeeping operations or other operations with regional partners. The idea that a modernized Algerian military might pose a threat to regional security was totally incorrect. Algeria was fully committed to regional stability and regarded the stability of Morocco and of the Moroccan throne as a central Algerian interest. In this regard, he recalled that during two coup attempts against Hassan II, Algeria had offered refuge to the King.

ALGERIA INTERESTED IN MIL-MIL INTEL EXCHANGE

17. (C) Senhadji also expressed interest in a military-military intelligence exchange agreement. Asked what he had in mind, he said such an agreement could focus on three areas: (1) education and training, (2) technology and equipment, and (3) exchange of military information. The general specifically asked for an agreement with the DIA. Ambassador said this touched on the ongoing broader issue of reform of the Algerian intelligence services, since it was his understanding that, at the request of the Algerian side, all intelligence exchange took place in service-to-service channels.

18. (C) Ambassador also noted that the U.S. Navy was interested in developing a naval intelligence exchange and that we had orally proposed this to Algeria. Perhaps this was something that could be discussed at the JMD. (COMMENT: In response to our oral proposal, the Algerians requested written clarification of what we were proposing. Sixth Fleet staff is currently working on a paper for the Algerians.) Senhadji was unaware of U.S. interest in a naval exchange and, in response to Ambassador's comments, insisted that the Algerian DRS (Department of Intelligence and Security) did not/not have a monopoly on intelligence and that the staff of the armed forces had its own bureau of military intelligence. There was more to military intelligence than just counter-terrorism, he said, and a military-to-military intelligence exchange could open up opportunities to share a variety of information of mutual interest. A military-to-military exchange agreement would be one more facet of military modernization in Algeria.

ERDMAN